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BLACK PANTHER
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PREVIOUSLY

Unfettered by the yoke of colonization, the African warrior nation of WAKANDA flourished and became a high-tech, resource-rich, ecologically-sound paradise—one that makes the rest of the world seem primitive in comparison. Ruling over this kingdom are the BLACK PANTHER and his queen, STORM.

At the conclusion of America's super hero civil war, T'Challa and Ororo found themselves in desperate straits: on the losing side of the fray, at odds with Wakanda's ruling council, and without an embassy in the United States. However, their luck seemed to change when Reed Richards and Sue Storm offered the couple residence in the Baxter Building and their places in the Fantastic Four.

Returning to the Baxter Building after their first mission with the Thing and the Human Torch, T'Challa and Storm were immediately ambushed by a monster from the Negative Zone. Hoping to teleport the bug back to where it came from, T'Challa took a risk and used the unreliable magic of King Solomon's golden frogs. While the gamble did pay off and the team was able to extract the bug from the Baxter Building, they ended up somewhere far more perilous than the Negative Zone: a Skrull homeworld, one about to be invaded by some familiar-looking zombies!

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UH, BEN, COULD YOU, LIKE, FOCUS? WE'VE GOT SKRULLS UP THE WAZOO.
I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN, BEN. THE SPECKS IN THE SKY.
I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHAT I'M LOOKING AT...

HELL OF A MESS PART 1 OF 3

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BEN!
KRUNCH
LOOKS LIKE OUR BUG FRIEND HAS SOME LIFE LEFT IN HIM.
WE'RE BEING *INVADED!* THIS BUNCH IS JUST THE FIRST WAVE! THERE ARE MORE ARRIVING!
BUT THEY ARE FIGHTING EACH OTHER!
THEY ARE *VIOLENT*-- THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS. THEY'LL TURN ON US SOON ENOUGH!
BACK OFF, BEFORE I ROAST YOU IN THE SHELL!
WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO WASTE ON THIS CREATURE. WE'RE ON A PLANET THAT IS GETTING MORE HOSTILE BY THE MINUTE. WE HAVE GOT TO GET *OUT* OF HERE!
ARE YOU OKAY, BENJAMIN?
I'VE FELT WORSE. NOT MUCH WORSE, BUT...
PLEASE EXTRACT YOURSELF QUICKLY. YOU NEED TO BE CLOSER FOR THE GOLDEN FROGS TO WORK.
WHAT? WE'RE GONNA TRUST THOSE PAPERWEIGHTS TO NOT SCREW US OVER TWICE?

MEANWHILE, AT THE SKRULL MILITARY COMMAND POST...
...YES, WE ARE *AWARE* OF THE INVASION. WE WILL BE SENDING TROOPS TO YOUR LOCATION. WHAT IS YOUR SECTOR?
EXCUSE ME, SIR.
WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE THREAT?
WELL, BY THE ENERGY SIGNATURE, IT APPEARS TO BE, WELL...*GALACTUS, THE DEVOURER OF WORLDS!*
WATCH YOUR VOLUME. YOU'LL CAUSE A PANIC AT COMMAND CENTRAL!
A THOUSAND PARDONS, GENERAL. MY HEARING...
IN ANY CASE, WHEN WE GET A VISUAL, THE APPEARANCE DOESN'T MATCH UP.
WHAT IN ZURATHA'S PAW IS *THAT?*
THE BEST MATCH WE CAN FIND IS FROM *EARTH*, THEIR SUPER-POWERED FORCES HAVE A SIMILAR APPEARANCE... BUT THIS BUNCH LOOKS DISMEMBERED AND DECAYED.
WE MUST TAKE ACTION IN PREPARATION FOR THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF THREAT!
INITIATE THE *GALACTUS PROTOCOLS* IMMEDIATELY!

MAN, I CAN TASTE THAT SKRULL MEAT NOW!
FIGURES AN OUTDOORSY TYPE LIKE YOU WOULD GO FOR WILD GAME LIKE THAT. I JUST HOPE WE COME ACROSS A PLANET WITH INTELLIGENT MAMMALS SOME TIME SOON.
PLEASE, TONY, QUIT TRYING TO PLAY THAT EPICUREAN ROLE UP IN HERE. I SEEN YOU GRUBBING DOWN ON ALL KINDS OF ALIEN GIZZARDS LIKE IT WAS GOING OUT OF STYLE.
CAN SOMEONE PLEASE TRANSLATE CAGE'S GHETTO ARGOT FOR ME?
HOW MANY LIGHT-YEARS HAVE YOU TWO BEEN BICKERING LIKE--WHUFF!
F-ZAAAAAT
DAMN, HE HIT THAT FORCE FIELD HARD.
HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!

HERE'S A LITTLE PAYBACK, YA ROACH!
KER-RACK!
NICE FASTBALL.
I TRY.
GROUP TIGHTLY. WE NEED TO GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE--
SOMETHING TELLS ME THEY AREN'T JUST HERE TO ARREST US.

SHRECK
DO THEY NOT GET THAT WE HAVE THE POWER OF GALACTUS? THAT WE GOT JUICED UP ON HIS POWER COSMIC WHEN WE ATE HIM?
DO THEY NOT SEE THE GALACTUS GEAR WE'RE ROCKIN'? YOU CAN'T GET AWAY WITH WEARING A TECHNO-JUMPER UNLESS YOU ARE ENDOWED WITH GODLIKE ABILITY!
DID YOU SEE WHAT THEY JUST DID? THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! THEY--
FIRE THE LONG-RANGE MISSILES.
YES, SIR!
KLIK
FWOOOSH

OH MAN, EVERY TIME WITH THE MISSILES.
MAKING HULK MAD!
BOOM!
IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME BETWEEN FEEDINGS. WITHOUT NOURISHMENT, WE MIGHT FEED OFF OF OUR OWN COSMIC SPARK UNTIL THERE'S NOT ENOUGH LEFT TO SUSTAIN A LARGE ATTACK.
MAKES SENSE. THAT'S HOW WE DEFEATED GALACTUS IN THE FIRST PLACE.

BOOM
OKAY, BUDDY, THE WARM-UP ACT IS OVER. TIME FOR THE NEXT ROUND.

WHA--
THAT'S...
TONY?
CAGE?
SOMETHING'S WRONG. WE NEED TO GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE-- NOW.
WHERE DID LUNCH GO?
SMASH

YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING ME.
FLAME ON!
HOLD ON, BELOVED! LET ME GENERATE A WIND CURRENT TO CATCH--
--BEN.
SORRY, BENJAMIN.
HEY, IT'S THE THOUGHT THAT COUNTS.
THOSE FROGS KNOW WHAT THEY'RE DOING. THEY THINK IT'S FUNNY.
JOHNNY, WOULD YOU ILLUMINATE THIS DARK CAVERN SO WE CAN SEE WHO ELSE IS WITH US?
WILL DO!

THAT'S AN INTERESTING THEORY, BEN.
WHAT?
THAT THE FROGS ARE SENTIENT, BUT NOT REVEALING THEMSELVES AS SUCH. "PLAYING POSSUM" IS THE PHRASE, I BELIEVE.
OH, YEAH! THOSE FROGS ARE PLAYING US FOR SURE!
ALRIGHT... SKRULLS, ZOMBIES.. COME OUT, COME OUT, WHEREVER YOU ARE!
WHAM
LYJA...?

WHAT THE--?
REED? WHAT GIVES?
SPLUD
JOHNNY, IF YOU'RE JOKING, THIS IS NOT THE TIME AND I AM NOT THE ONE.
FWOOSH
IS THAT THE SUPER SKRULL?
SURRENDER, HUMAN.

YOUR HUSBAND WILL SUFFOCATE IF YOU DO NOT COOPERATE--
SKRULL
HOW DID YOU.. W-W-W-WHAT WAS THAT?
TOUCH ME AGAIN, AND I'LL DEADEN EVERY NERVE IN YOUR BODY.
BOOM
WHAT'S WITH THESE WANNABE SUPER SKRULLS?
ALLOW ME TO EXPLAIN...

DESPITE MANY ATTEMPTS, WE COULD NOT RECREATE THE SUPER SKRULL. HOWEVER, WE COULD RECREATE THE INDIVIDUAL POWERS OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR, EACH IN ONE SUBJECT.
BUT NOW YOU HAVE NEW POWERS. VERY WELL.
YOU KNOW THE "*INVISIBLE WOMAN*" IS THE MOST POWERFUL OF YOUR GROUP. SHE CAN KILL THE TORCH WITH A THOUGHT, AND KILL THE REST OF YOU JUST AS EASILY.
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
THAT'S FOR *YOU* TO ANSWER. YOU INVADED *US*.
WE ACTUALLY HAVE NO CONNECTION TO THE...AH...*ZOMBIES*... ATTACKING YOUR PLANET. OUR ARRIVAL HERE WAS AN ACCIDENT.
I KNOW THAT SOUNDS IMPROBABLE, BUT WE'D ACTUALLY LIKE TO HELP YOU DEFEND YOUR PEOPLE AGAINST THOSE MONSTERS.
CAN YOU STOP THEM?
I DON'T KNOW. BUT WE WILL TRY.
IS THAT... LYJA?
4

OH MAN, SKRULL MEAT ISN'T THAT BAD AFTER ALL. ESPECIALLY IF YOU TOAST IT WITH GALACTUS' ENERGY.
I LIKE IT RAW.
YOU WOULD.
GOTTA LOVE WARSHIPS. THEY'RE LIKE BOXES OF POPCORN!
HULK STILL HUNGRY!
OF COURSE YOU ARE, HULK. WE'RE ZOMBIES, MAN.
EVEN IF WE EAT EVERYBODY ON THIS PLANET--AND WE WILL--WE'LL STILL BE HUNGRY.
UH.

WHIP
DON'T TALK TO HULK LIKE HULK IS STUPID!
OW! DAMN!
HERE YOU GO, BUDDY.
YOU ALL ARE NOT GETTING IT.
PUNY BANNER COULD EXPLAIN.

THESE CREATURES HAVE ALREADY EATEN AN ENTIRE CITY'S WORTH OF PEOPLE!
BUT, SIR, WHY WASTE ANOTHER FLYING ARMADA--?
WE NEED TO *DROP THE BOMB!* WE NEED TO BLOW THEM OFF THE PLANET!
GENERAL, BEFORE YOU SEND MORE TROOPS TO CERTAIN DEATH, LET'S GET MORE INFORMATION ON OUR FOE.
YOU BROUGHT THEM *HERE!?*
I KNOW OUR TWO WORLDS HAVE BEEN AT ODDS IN THE PAST, BUT THOSE ABOMINATIONS ARE A THREAT TO ALL LIFE. WE HAVE TO UNIFY TO SURVIVE.
KEEP TALKING. IF OUR BOMBING MISSION FAILS, I MAY EVEN LET YOU LIVE.
EMPTY THREATS ARE POINTLESS, SIR. WE DEFEATED A PLATOON OF YOUR MEN EVEN BEFORE THE ZOMBIES ATTACKED. AND WE JUST PUT DOWN YOUR LAME ATTEMPT AT DUPLICATING THE FANTASTIC FOUR.
NOT TRUE! OUR MOST POWERFUL MEMBER--
--WAS ABOUT TO FALL HARD JUST LIKE THE REST. BUT WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO WASTE ON POINTLESS BATTLES WHEN THE REAL ENEMY IS OUT THERE...

"...AND THE SOLDIERS OF YOUR ARMADA ARE ALREADY DEAD."
PREPARE TO LAUNCH IN 10...9...
WHA--
A GIANT MONSTER!
EVADE!
A SURPRISE PRIZE IN EVERY PACKAGE!
HOPE THE ARMOR DOESN'T STICK IN MY GUMS!

FIRE AT WILL!!!
CRUNCH!
HULK SAY: GET IN HULK'S BELLY!!!
CRUNCH!
KNOCK KNOCK!
TIME FOR A HUNGRY MAN DINNER!
HEY! SAVE SOME FOR ME!

READY TO TALK YET?
EXCUSE ME...BUT IS YOUR NAME LYJA?
I WAS THINKING THE SAME THING, JOHNNY.
HOW...DID YOU KNOW THAT?
I KNEW IT! DON'T YOU REMEMBER ME? WE MET WHEN YOU WERE A SPY ON EARTH, REMEMBER?
I HAVE NEVER BEEN ON EARTH. PERHAPS ALL SKRULLS LOOK ALIKE TO YOU. HUMANS CERTAINLY DO TO US.
THEN HOW DID I KNOW YOUR NAME? I'M TELLING YOU, I KNOW. YOU.
GET AWAY FROM ME, HUMAN!
WOW, SHE SAID THAT LIKE IT WAS THE WORST INSULT EVER.
MAYBE SHE'S GOT SOME KINDA MEMORY IMPLANTS. OR MAYBE--
--THIS IS SOME KINDA COCKAMAMIE ALTERNATE UNIVERSE!

HEY, GUYS! TORCHY AND I GOT AN IDEA!
THERE MUST BE SOME WAY YOU CAN REACH EARTH. WE HAVE TO FIND OUT WHAT HAS HAPPENED THERE TO DETERMINE WHAT THESE ZOMBIES ARE--
CRASH!
I KNEW I SMELLED A HOT MEAL NEARBY!
NEXT: IT'S SLOBBERIN' TIME!